

FORM PTO-1390  
(REV. 11-2000)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER

COL 202

TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES  
DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US)  
CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371

U.S. APPLICATION NO. (If known, see 37 CFR 1.5)

09/786547

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO.

PCT/BE 99/00115

INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE

2 SEP. 1999

PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED

2 SEP. 1998

TITLE OF INVENTION

SUITCASE WITH ROLLERS

APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US

ROGER DE LATHOUWER

Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:



1. ☒ This is a **FIRST** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.
2. ☐ This is a **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.
3. ☐ This is an express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)). The submission must include items (5), (6), (9) and (21) indicated below.
4. ☒ The US has been elected by the expiration of 19 months from the priority date (Article 31).
5. ☐ A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2))
  - a. ☐ is attached hereto (required only if not communicated by the International Bureau).
  - b. ☐ has been communicated by the International Bureau.
  - c. ☐ is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US).
6. ☒ An English language translation of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)).
  - a. ☒ is attached hereto.
  - b. ☐ has been previously submitted under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4).
7. ☐ Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3))
  - a. ☐ are attached hereto (required only if not communicated by the International Bureau).
  - b. ☐ have been communicated by the International Bureau.
  - c. ☐ have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired.
  - d. ☐ have not been made and will not be made.
8. ☐ An English language translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)).
9. ☒ An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)).
10. ☒ An English language translation of the annexes of the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)).

## Items 11 to 20 below concern document(s) or information included:

11. ☐ An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98.
12. ☐ An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included.
13. ☒ A **FIRST** preliminary amendment.
14. ☐ A **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** preliminary amendment.
15. ☐ A substitute specification.
16. ☐ A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.
17. ☐ A computer-readable form of the sequence listing in accordance with PCT Rule 13ter.2 and 35 U.S.C. 1.821 - 1.825.
18. ☐ A second copy of the published international application under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4).
19. ☐ A second copy of the English language translation of the international application under 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4).
20. ☒ Other items or information:
 

<x> COVER PAGE OF PCT APPLICATION AS PUBLISHED

<x> REQUEST TO ACCEPT PATENT APPL. FOR ENTR INTO US NATIONAL PHASE

U.S. APPLICATION NO. <b>09/786547</b>		INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. <b>PCT/BE 99/00115</b>		ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER <b>COL 202</b>	
17. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The following fees are submitted: <b>BASIC NATIONAL FEE (37 CFR 1.492 (a) (1) - (5)) :</b> Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO and International Search Report not prepared by the EPO or JPO ..... <b>\$1000.00</b> International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but International Search Report prepared by the EPO or JPO ..... <b>\$860.00</b> International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO ..... <b>\$710.00</b> International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) but all claims did not satisfy provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) ..... <b>\$690.00</b> International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) ..... <b>\$100.00</b> <b>ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =</b>				CALCULATIONS PTO USE ONLY	
Surcharge of \$130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(e)).				\$	
CLAIMS	NUMBER FILED	NUMBER EXTRA	RATE		
Total claims	11 - 20 =		X \$18.00	\$	
Independent claims	1 - 3 =		X \$80.00	\$	
MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM(S) (if applicable)			+ \$270.00	\$	
<b>TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =</b>				\$ 860.00	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applicant claims small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27. The fees indicated above are reduced by 1/2.				\$ 430.00	
<b>SUBTOTAL =</b>				\$ 430.00	
Processing fee of \$130.00 for furnishing the English translation later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)).				\$	
<b>TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =</b>				\$ 430.00	
Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31). \$40.00 per property				\$	
<b>TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED =</b>				\$ 430.00	
				Amount to be refunded:	\$
				charged:	\$
a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A check in the amount of \$ <u>430.00</u> to cover the above fees is enclosed.  b. <input type="checkbox"/> Please charge my Deposit Account No. _____ in the amount of \$ _____ to cover the above fees. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.  c. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. <u>11-0224</u> . A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.					
<b>NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.</b>					
SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:					
 SIGNATURE:				Horst M. Kasper	
 NAME:				28,559	
REGISTRATION NUMBER					

U.S. APPLICATION NO. (if known, see 37 CFR 1.53)		INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO.		ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER	
09/786547		PCT/BE 99/00115		COL 202	
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<p>Surcharge of <b>\$130.00</b> for furnishing the oath or declaration later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(e)).</p>				<p><b>\$ 860.00</b></p>	
CLAIMS	NUMBER FILED	NUMBER EXTRA	RATE		
Total claims	11 - 20 =		X \$18.00	\$	
Independent claims	1 - 3 =		X \$80.00	\$	
MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM(S) (if applicable)			+ \$270.00	\$	
<b>TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =</b>				<b>\$ 860.00</b>	
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applicant claims small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27. The fees indicated above are reduced by 1/2.</p>				<p><b>\$ 430.00</b></p>	
<b>SUBTOTAL =</b>				<b>\$ 430.00</b>	
<p>Processing fee of <b>\$130.00</b> for furnishing the English translation later than <input type="checkbox"/> 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)).</p>				<p><b>\$</b></p>	
<b>TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =</b>				<b>\$ 430.00</b>	
<p>Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31). <b>\$40.00</b> per property</p>				<p><b>\$</b></p>	
<b>TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED =</b>				<b>\$ 430.00</b>	
				Amount to be refunded:	\$
				charged:	\$
<p>a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A check in the amount of \$ <u>430.00</u> to cover the above fees is enclosed.</p> <p>b. <input type="checkbox"/> Please charge my Deposit Account No. _____ in the amount of \$ _____ to cover the above fees. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.</p> <p>c. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. <u>11-0224</u>. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.</p>					
<p><b>NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.</b></p>					
<p>SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HORST M. KASPER, Ph.D. Patent Attorney 13 Aspen Drive Warren, N.J. 07059-5832</p>					
				<p style="text-align: right;">SIGNATURE: <u>Horst M. Kasper</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;">NAME: <u>28,559</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;">REGISTRATION NUMBER: _____</p>	

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Roger De Lathouwer  
Serial No: Art Unit:  
Filing Date:  
Title: SUITCASE WITH ROLLERS  
Examiner:

Priority application: Country: Belgium  
Priority application number: 9800645  
Priority date: 2 September 1998

PCT Application no: PCT/BE99/00115  
PCT Application filing date: 2 September 1999

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March 2, 2001 Attorney's Docket No.: Col202

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Hon. Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks  
Box PCT  
Washington, D.C. 20231

SIR:

This is a preliminary amendment to provide certain corrections in the above captioned patent application. Applicant petitions that, if required, the time for response be extended and the corresponding fee be charged. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required to Acct. No. 11-0224. Applicant further respectfully requests that this response be accepted

as a bona fide effort to meet any potential response requirements outstanding and due in the above captioned matter.

Please amend the application as follows:

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please delete claims 1 - 14 as filed with the international application PCT/BE99/00115 and amended according to Art. 34 PCT on September 6, 2000.

15. (new) Vertical suitcase of essentially parallelepipedal shape without rigid frame having faces consisting of supple material, wherein the rigidification of the suitcase is achieved by two tubes joining a lower surface part and an upper surface part supporting the aforesaid supple material, said tubes consisting of guides for the rods of a retractable handle provided in the upper part, said tubes being adjacent to a rear face opposite a front face able to be opened or provided with an opening, the upper and lower parts being in the form of a molded piece or a plate or sheet of plastic of incurvated form defining at least the

upper and lower rounded arrises of the rear face of the suitcase, the lateral faces being each made of a supple material and being hooped by a retaining elastic ring.

16. (new) Suitcase according to claim 1 in wherein the plastic is a semirigid plastic.

17. (new) Suitcase according to claim 1 wherein the upper and lower surface parts constitute the separate elements forming upper shell and lower shell.

18. (new) Suitcase according to claim 1 wherein the upper and lower surface parts are integrated into one integral piece with a central part covered by the rear face.

19. (new) Suitcase according to claim 1 wherein the incurvated form of the lower part or shell is imposed by the curved extremity of the tubes, the incurvated form of the upper part or shell being imposed by the lateral retaining rings, such being preferably metallic retaining rings,

provided in the form of two lateral frames defining the lateral faces in flexible material.

20. (new) Suitcase according to claim 1 wherein the upper and lower parts are in the form of a polyethylene sheet or plate.

21. (new) Suitcase according to claim 1 wherein the sheet constituting the upper part or shell does not support at least a front part of the upper face of the suitcase.

22. (new) Suitcase according to the preceding claim characterized in that a zip fastener opening, for example an opening zipper provided on the front face of the suitcase, extends up to at least the aforesaid front part, preferably between 10% and 50%, more preferably 15 to 40%, of its surface, enabling a partial opening of the upper face.

23. (new) Suitcase according to claim 3 in which the shell or part is attached by riveting, to the exterior of the incurvated extremities of the tubes.

24. (new) Assembly of suitcases according to claim 1 provided with wheels, of different dimensions constituting a set of suitcases being able to be disposed head to foot one in the other.

25. (new) Assembly according to the preceding claim in which there are more than 5 vertical suitcases being able to be stacked head to foot one in the other.

#### REMARKS

Claims 1-14 were in the case. Applicant is herewith canceling claims 1-14 as filed with the international application PCT/BE99/00115 and amended according to Art. 34 PCT on September 6, 2000.

Applicant is herewith introducing new claims 15-25. The language of the new claims 15 - 25 is based on a

modified language of claims 1 - 14 as amended according to Art. 34 PCT on September 6, 2000.

The present preliminary amendment is submitted in order to provide clarification of the claim language and in order to eliminate any multiple dependencies of the claims.

Should there be any multiply dependent claims remaining, such remaining multiply dependent claims are to be deemed and treated as cancelled by the applicant.

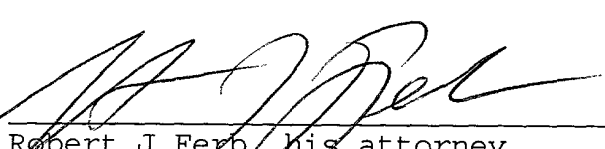
Entry of the above recited corrections prior to calculation of the fee is respectfully requested.

Entry of the above recited corrections is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger De Lathouwer

By:

  
Robert J. Ferb, his attorney,  
13 Forest Drive, Warren, N.J. 07059  
Tel. (908) 757-2839 Fax: (908) 668-5262  
Reg.No. 29536; Docket No.: COL202

\*%pt1\PAMEND(Col202A1(March 2, 2001(tm

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Roger De Lathouwer  
Serial No: Art Unit:  
Filing Date:  
Title: SUITCASE WITH ROLLERS  
Examiner:

Priority application: Country: Belgium  
Priority application number: 9800645  
Priority date: 2 September 1998

PCT Application no: PCT/BE99/00115  
PCT Application filing date: 2 September 1999

-----  
March 2, 2001 Attorney's Docket No.: Col202

**REQUEST TO ACCEPT PATENT APPLICATION FOR ENTERING UNITED**  
**STATES NATIONAL PHASE UNDER 35 USC °371**

Hon. Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks  
**Box PCT**  
Washington, D.C. 20231

SIR:

A patent application related to the above identified application was filed on September 2, 1999 under the PCT Treaty under the docket number PCT/BE99/00115.

An English translation of the originally filed PCT application PCT/BE99/00115 is enclosed with this filing.

Furhermore, an English translation of the Annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report dated September 6, 2000 is also enclosed with this filing.

09354-0004  
T0300-493260

097854-03004  
It is respectfully requested that the present application be treated as an application filed under the Section 35 U.S.C. §371 for transferring a PCT application PCT/BE99/00115, naming the United States, into the national phase and that the present application be granted any and all benefits and in particular those benefits relating to a priority recognition of prior filings under jurisdiction of treaty members and available under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (Washington Treaty), the Paris Convention Treaty, and under the United States Code based on the filing under the Patent Cooperation Treaty of PCT application PCT/BE99/00115.

If there should be any problems in granting the benefits available under the Patent Cooperation Treaty and/or 35 USC §371 based on such items as incompleteness of application, excessive time delays or defective application papers, then it is alternatively respectfully requested that prior to the expiration through abandonment of a filing under 35 USC §371 and under charging the required fees from deposit account, the present application be treated as an application and/or continuation application filed at a time required under any one of the sections 35

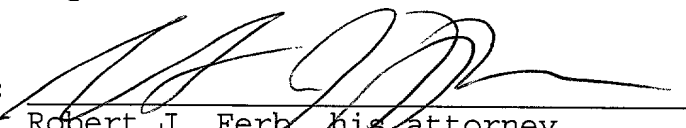
U.S.C. §111, 35 U.S.C. §363, and/or 35 U.S.C. §365(c) as applicable and that the present application be treated as a continuation or continuation-in-part application of the PCT application PCT/BE99/00115.

Recognition of PCT national phase status or, respectively, continuation or continuation-in-part status under the PCT Treaty and/or of the claimed priority date of 2 September 1998 is respectfully requested for the patent application documents in the above captioned matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger De Lathouwer

By:

  
Robert J. Ferb, his attorney,  
13 Forest Drive, Warren, N.J. 07059  
Tel. (908) 757-2839 Fax: (908) 668-5262  
Reg.No. 29536; Docket No.: Col202

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Roger De Lathouwer  
Serial No: Art Unit:  
Filing Date:  
Title: SUITCASE WITH ROLLERS  
Examiner:

Priority application: Country: Belgium  
Priority application number: 9800645  
Priority date: 2 September 1998

PCT Application no: PCT/BE99/00115  
PCT Application filing date: 2 September 1999

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March 2, 2001 Attorney's Docket No.: Col202

CLAIM OF PRIORITY

Hon. Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks  
Box PCT  
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Pursuant to Title 35, United States Code, Section 119 (1952), the undersigned hereby claims the benefit of the filing date of a prior foreign patent application forming a basis of the PCT application viz.:

Country: Belgium  
Application No.: 9800645  
Date of Filing: 2 September 1998

In support of this claim, a certified copy of the aforementioned foreign patent application is believed to

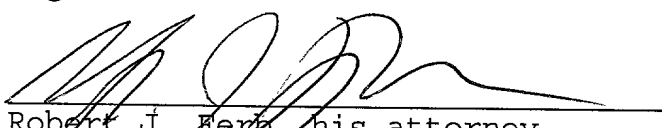
0976547-0000

have been submitted by the World Intellectual Property Organization and should have been received by the United States Patent and Trademark Office prior to the expiration of 20 months from the first priority date of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger De Lathouwer

By:

  
Robert J. Ferb, his attorney,  
13 Forest Drive, Warren, N.J. 07059  
Tel.: (908) 757-2839 Fax: (908) 668-5262  
Reg.No. 29536; Docket No.: Col202

\*%ptn:pctnat:2(Col202PC(March 2, 2001(tm

09/786547

JC02 Rec'd PGT/PTO 02 MAR 2001

Inventor(s): ROGER DE LATHOUWER

Invention: SUITCASE WITH ROLLERS

Horst M. Kasper, his attorney  
13 forest Drive , Warren, N.J. 07059  
tel: (908) 757-2839; (908) 668-5262  
Reg.No. 28559, Docket No.: COL202

TRANSLATION OF PCT APPLICATION

AS FILED

## Suitcase with rollers

This invention relates to a vertical rolling suitcase. This type of suitcase has proved to be particularly useful and has experienced an increasing success over the past years.

Nevertheless a reduction in weight is always being sought which does not detract from the solidity of the suitcase. Moreover, in manufacturing and shipment, the suitcases being essentially bulky articles, it is also important for transportation and deliveries to the retailers to be able to group several suitcases of one and the same type but of different dimensions by stacking one in the other. It is thus common practice, for a suitcase of large dimensions, to be able to contain two suitcases of lesser dimensions of the same model thus constituting a set of suitcases, the smaller being contained in the other. The difference in size must nevertheless usually be at least 9 cm in order to enable this type of stacking of vertical suitcases (instead of 5 cm for classic suitcases of the horizontal type).

This invention aims at improving these two qualities which are the lightness and the minimum bulkiness per unit

during transportation.

According to the invention, a difference in weight is indeed observed with an equivalent suitcase of the former state-of-the-art of the order of 30 to 40% (depending on the dimensions). Moreover stacking-up is considerably improved. Indeed, up to 6 different dimensions of one and the same set of suitcases can be contained one in the other for transportation, the differences in dimensions can decrease to 3 cm between 2 consecutive sizes.

In the traditional suitcase, the rolling and traction system is not part of the basic structure of the suitcase. The faces rigidified by plastic or by wood are riveted onto a frame which hoops the suitcase. The rolling system is made to form one piece with the frame by means of hard and indeformable elements. The result is a heavy and relatively indeformable suitcase.

The purpose of the invention is to avoid a double use between the frame and the rolling system. According to the invention, the rolling system itself provides the vertical rigidity of the suitcase.

A suitcase is thus put forward whose volume is constructed around telescopic tubes incurvated on the bottom and no longer around a frame. The volume is no longer rigid

as in a "box" type of conception. Indeed the flanks are supple: the two sides (lateral faces) are hooped by a metallic retaining ring and can be flattened while regaining their form as soon as the pressure ceases. The suitcase therefore has elastic lateral sides. It is very light and very strong because it can deform its width without breaking.

The plastic reinforcing parts of the upper and lower faces are rigidified by their curvature and their extension on the rear face. The back of the suitcase between the metallic retaining rings and the telescopic tubes can advantageously remain partially without plastic support in order to achieve a maximum lightness.

According to one aspect of the invention, a vertical suitcase of essentially parallelepipedal form is put forward without central frame in steel girdling it inside, suitcase of which the faces consist of supple material, preferably a fabric. The rigidification of the suitcase is essentially achieved by two tubes joining a lower part or shell and an upper part or shell, extending at least partially into the planes perpendicular to the aforesaid tubes, which will be covered by the fabric on their outer faces, as well as by two metallic retaining rings, tightening the fabric of the

lateral faces. The tubes are preferably guides for the rods of a retractable handle provided in the upper part or shell, the upper and lower parts or shells being in the form of a plate or sheet of plastic of incurvated form defining at least the upper and lower rounded arrises of the rear face of the suitcase.

The upper and lower parts or shells can be preformed, for example by molding. Preferably these parts or shells will be in semirigid plastic.

Advantageously indeed the upper and lower shells consist of two rectangular plates or sheets of semirigid plastic whose incurvated form is principally imposed by the, preferably metallic, lateral retaining rings. Advantageously, the lower shell is also incurvated by the curved extremities of the above mentioned tubes. The upper shell is maintained incurvated by being fixed in the dorsal face by the above mentioned tubes and in the plane of the upper face by a preferably metallic traverse perpendicular to the retaining rings.

These parts or shells therefore comprise the upper and lower rounded arrises of the rear face without necessarily incorporating a substantial part of this latter face. On the other hand the shells form the totality or a

substantial part of the upper and lower faces.

According to one embodiment, the central part of the rear face can also comprise a plastic plate or sheet which nevertheless does not substantially contribute to the rigidity of the whole but provides an aesthetic effect. Indeed, according to this variant, the objects contained in the baggage will not deform the fabric face as much. This plate can be less thick than the above mentioned shells. According to another embodiment, the two shells are integrated into one single piece with the aforementioned central part.

The metallic retaining rings are provided in the form of two lateral frames of rectangular form with rounded corners hooping the lateral fabric faces.

The plastic sheets can advantageously consist of polyethylene, of a few millimeters thickness (approximately 3 mm, preferably between 2.5 to 3.5 mm). These sheets, or in any case the upper sheets are sufficiently supple in order to be able to incurvate under the effect of the lateral frames in metallic retaining rings. They are therefore not necessarily previously thermo-formed.

The utilization of semirigid sheets instead of molded pieces enables an economy of weight and a more economical

manufacturing.

According to another aspect of the invention, preferably 3 wheels are provided in line placed in the incurvation of the lower shell between and on either side of the telescopic tubes. This advantageously enables the lack of rigidity of the lower shell to be compensated and greatly contributes to the stability of the whole. The wheels partially fit into the openings provided in the incurvation of the lower shell to which they are attached. The central wheel enables a better stability and a more efficient rolling to be achieved by avoiding the "waddling" effect notwithstanding the lightness of the lower shell. The lateral wheels can advantageously be attached close to the corners, in wheel recesses covering the corners and protecting them from shocks. Moreover the greater width of the track improves the stability.

Conventionally, in addition to the telescoping handle, one or more handles can be provided sewn or riveted onto the upper face (for the vertical position) or a lateral face (for transportation and horizontal position).

According to the invention, the handle on the upper face will be attached to the reinforcement bar extending over the entire width of the baggage. The part will be a

piece of metal, e.g. slotted, or in plastic, for example with a honeycomb structure. On the lateral face the handle will preferably be attached to a simple reinforcement of reduced size in the form of an area of raised stitching in the central part.

According to the invention the stackability is especially improved by the fact that the upper shell is advantageously cut out in such a manner that it does not entirely cover the upper face. Because of this the front portion of the upper face, which can correspond to almost 50%, preferably 30 to 40%, of the surface of this, is more supple as only consisting of fabric held by the lateral metallic retaining rings.

Moreover, the lateral faces hooped by a perimeter in metal (retaining ring) are supple and can adapt with more play in order to receive the lateral faces of suitcases of lesser dimensions. Indeed, there is no central frame in steel holding these lateral faces and provided between the two large faces, equidistance from these.

According to one aspect of the invention indeed, the suitcases are stackable head to foot. The wheels of a smaller suitcase nest into the supple part of the upper face of the larger suitcase. The number of smaller suitcases

contained in a suitcase of given dimension can thus be doubled. Up to 6 suitcases can thus be "stacked" whose dimensions only vary by pitches of 3 to 6 cm according to the type of handle (instead of 9 cm to 10 cm with the closest known systems for vertical suitcases).

The invention will be better understood by examining the drawings submitted in appendix, only by way of example of preferred embodiments, in which

- figure 1 represents a diagram of the structure of a suitcase according to the invention, the covering fabric not being represented

- figure 2 is an exploded view of the various principal elements,

- figures 3a to 3c represent in perspective suitcases according to the invention in vertical position with a retractable handle capable of being totally integrated into the suitcase or not,

- figure 4 illustrates in perspective the internal stacking of one suitcase in the other,

- figure 5 is a sectional drawing of a stacking according to figure 4.

In fig. 1 the structure can be distinguished partially



clarifies the structure of a suitcase according to the invention. The suitcase is represented vertically. The two frames of metallic retaining rings 1, the respective upper and lower shells 2 and 2' form the arrises 12 and 12', the 3 wheels 5 and the telescopic tubes 3 can be distinguished. The attachment parts 8 on the shell 2 at the upper extremity of the telescopic tubes as well as the parts 17 which work together with the parts 8 for the attachment of the guides 3 in the attachment areas 10, 10' of the shells to these tubes 3, in this example by means of a rectangular reinforcement element 11, possibly riveted, are also represented. It will nevertheless also be noted that the reinforcing parts 11 and 11' are not indispensable. On the other hand, the reinforcing part 18 in slotted metal which extends over the entire width, and located below a possibly provided classic handle, significantly contributes to the structure of the baggage. Fig. 2 constitutes a variant in relation to fig. 1 to the extent that the tubes each consist of an at least partially telescopic straight part and an incurvated part made to form one piece in 9 by a means known in itself.

Figs. 3a to 3c represent in perspective the final aspect of some suitcases according to the invention. Each time the rear face 7, the feet 6' and the wheels 5 can be

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distinguished. An opening zipper 20 of the front face 27 of the suitcase extends up to at least the aforesaid front part 16, which enables a partial opening of the upper face. Fig. 3a illustrates a suitcase for which the handle of rectangular section can be retracted into a rigid housing and in a way be made flush with the shell 2. In figure 3b, the handle remains slightly protruding. In fig. 3c, the handle and its circular section rods can be entirely inserted into a pocket 15 inside the suitcase, which can be reclosed with a flap 15' and a zipper. In this latter case, as with the suitcase from fig. 3a, the upper plate is cut out for this purpose. The solution from 3c enables the most reduced dimension pitch for the head-to-foot stacking of the suitcases.

Fig. 4 is a view in perspective of a head-to-foot stacking-up of two suitcases a and b, of slightly different dimensions, the front face 27a of the larger suitcase being folded back toward the outside by opening a zip fastener 20a. Inside the suitcase a the back 7b of the suitcase b can be distinguished, with the three wheels 5b and the retracted handle 4b. The part 16 extending the front face 27 is destined to cover the wheels 5b after closing the suitcase a.

Fig. 5 is a schematic sectional drawing of a stacking according to fig. 4. The wheels 5a do not prevent the positioning of the suitcase b inside the suitcase a, because the semirigid shell 2b does not extend over the entirety of the upper face thus leaving a supple part 16' suitable for conforming to receive an inside part of the wheels 5a.

Claims:

1. Vertical suitcase without rigid frame whose faces consist of supple material, the rigidification of the suitcase being achieved by two tubes (3) joining a lower surface part (2') and an upper supporting surface part (2) of the aforesaid supple material, the tubes consisting of guides for the rods (14) of a retractable handle (4) in the upper part (2), the upper and lower parts being in the form of a plate or sheet of semirigid plastic of incurvated form defining at least the upper and lower rounded arrises (12, 12') of the rear face (7) of the suitcase.
2. Suitcase according to claim 1 in which the plastic is a semirigid plastic.
3. Suitcase according to claim 1 in which the upper and lower surface parts constitute the separate elements forming upper shell and lower shell.
4. Suitcase according to any of the claims 1 through 3 in which the incurvated form of the lower part or shell (2') is imposed by the curved extremity of the above mentioned tubes

(3), the incurvated form of the upper part or shell (2) being imposed by the lateral retaining rings (1), preferably metallic retaining rings, provided in the form of two lateral frames defining the lateral faces in flexible material.

5. Suitcase according to any of the claims 1 through 4 in which the aforesaid parts (2, 2') are in the form of a polyethylene sheet or plate.

6. Suitcase according to any of the claims 1 through 3 in which the part (2) is in rigid plastic.

7. Suitcase according to the preceding claims comprising wheels (5) in the rounded arris (12') of the lower part or shell.

8. Suitcase according to the preceding claim in which there are three wheels (5) in line.

9. Suitcase according to any of the preceding claims characterized in that the sheet constituting the upper part or shell (2) does not support at least a front part (16) of

the upper face of the suitcase.

10. Suitcase according to the preceding claim characterized in that a zip fastener opening, for example an opening zipper (20) provided on the front face of the suitcase, extends up to at least the aforesaid front part (16), preferably between 10% and 50%, preferably 15 to 40%, of its surface, enabling a partial opening of the upper face.

11. Suitcase according to claim 3 in which the shell or part (2') is attached, for example by riveting, to the exterior of the incurvated extremities of the tubes (3).

12. Suitcase according to the preceding claim characterized in that the extremity of the tubes 3 is incurvated with flattening, the riveting to the plate being effected at the aforesaid flattenings.

13. Assembly of suitcases according to claims 1 through 9 provided with wheels, of different dimensions constituting a set of suitcases, disposed head to foot one in the other.

14. Assembly according to the preceding claim in which

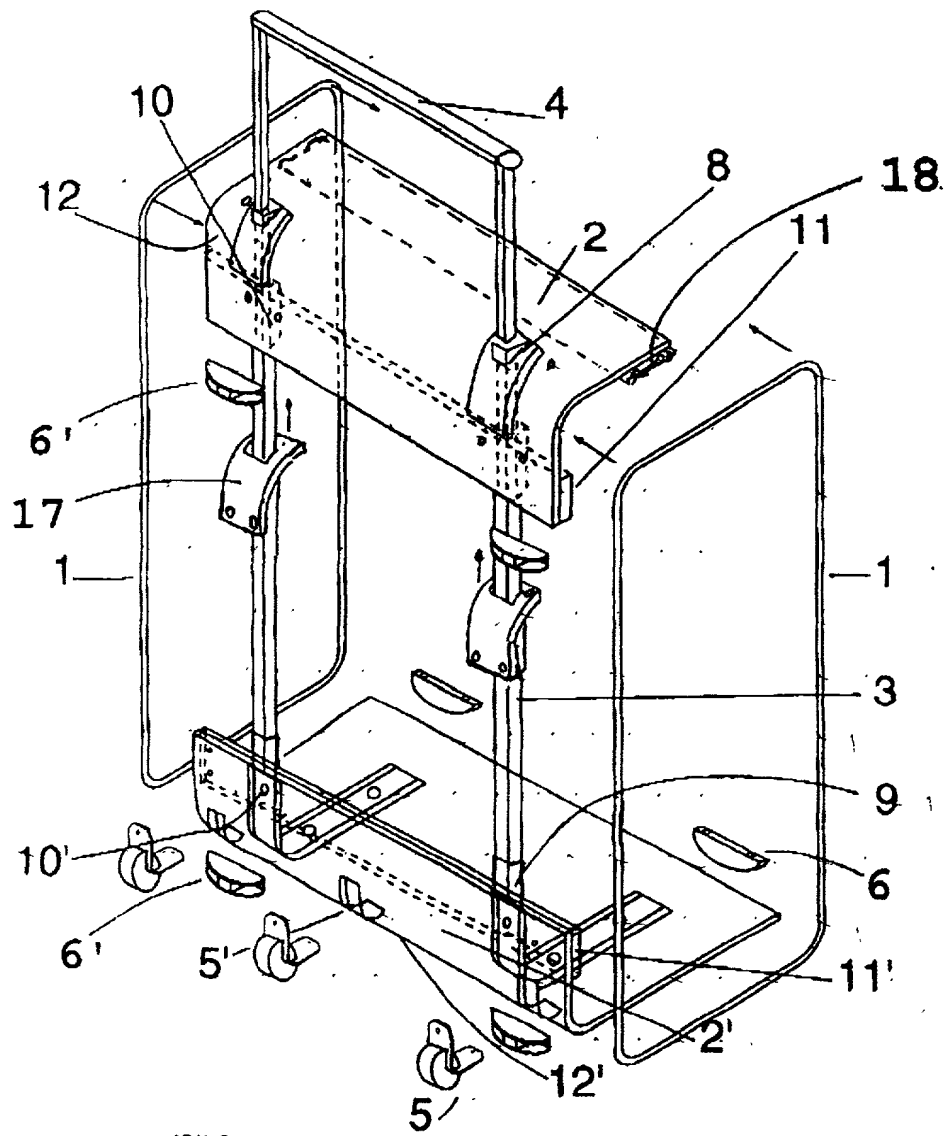
there are more than 5 vertical suitcases stacked head to foot one in the other.

## Abstract of the Disclosure

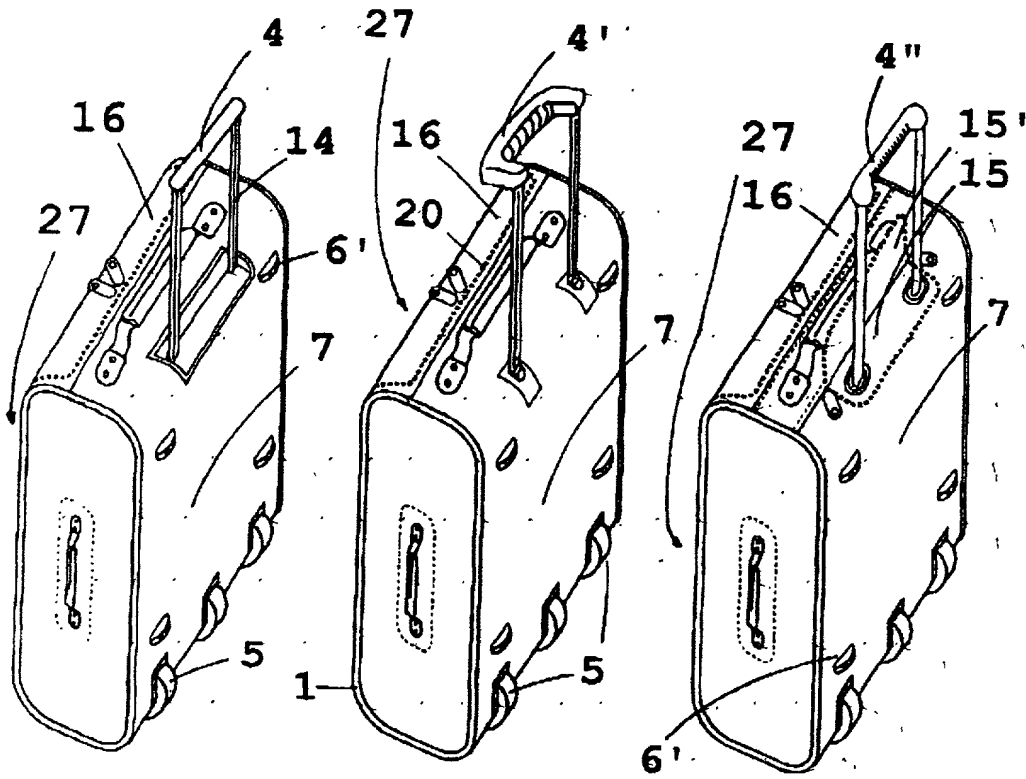
The invention relates to a vertical suitcase without rigid frame whose faces consist of supple material, for example a fabric. The rigidification of the suitcase is achieved by two tubes (3) joining a lower shell (2') and an upper supporting shell (2) of supple material. The tubes are guides for the rods (14) of a retractable handle (4) in the upper shell (2). The upper and lower shells are in the form of a plate or sheet of semirigid plastic of incurvated form defining at least the upper and lower rounded arrises (12, 12') of the rear face (7) of the suitcase. The incurvated form of the lower shell (2') is in particular imposed by the curved extremity of the tubes (3). The incurvated form of the upper shell (2) is imposed by the retaining rings (1), preferably metallic retaining rings, provided in the form of two lateral frames defining the lateral faces in flexible material.

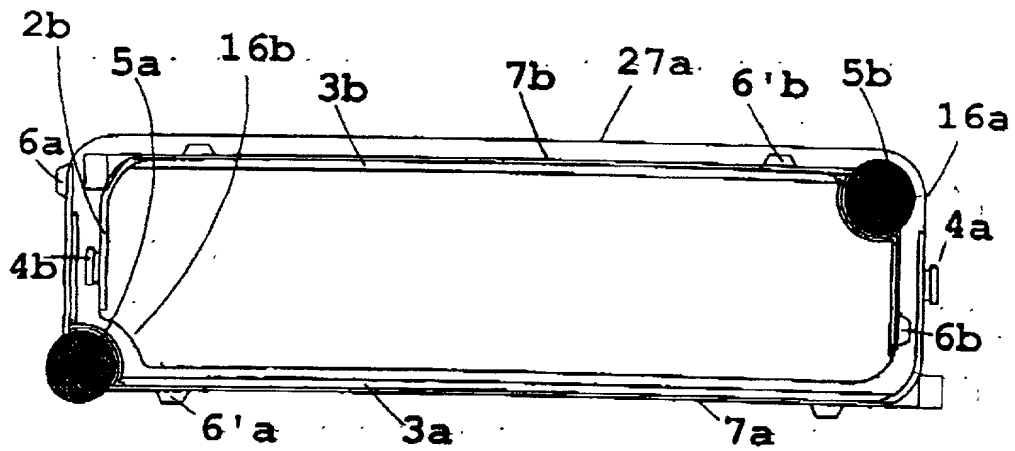
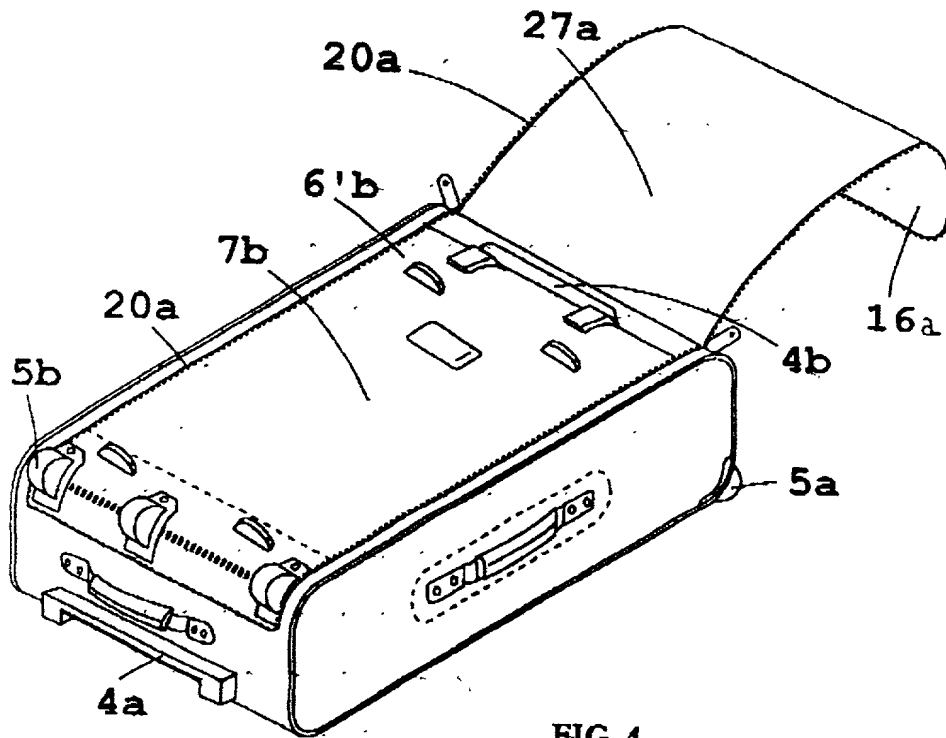
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**FIG. 2**





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# DECLARATION FOR UTILITY OR DESIGN PATENT APPLICATION (37 CFR 1.63)

☒ Declaration  
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with Initial  
Filing

OR

☐ Declaration  
Submitted after Initial  
Filing (surcharge  
(37 CFR 1.16 (e))  
required)

Attorney Docket Number	COL 202
First Named Inventor	ROGER DE LATHOUWER
<b>COMPLETE IF KNOWN</b>	
Application Number	/
Filing Date	
Group Art Unit	
Examiner Name	

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, mailing address, and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

**Suitcase with rollers**

(Title of the invention)

The specification of which

☐ is attached hereto

OR

☒ was filed on (MM/DD/YYYY)

09/02/99

as United States Application Number or PCT International

Application Number PCT/BE99/00115

and was amended on (MM/DD/YYYY)

09/06/00

(if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment specifically referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR 1.56, including for continuation-in-part applications, material information which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of the continuation-in-part application.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d) or 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or 365(a) of any PCT international application which designated at least one country other than the United States of America, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or any PCT international application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Application Number(s)	Country	Foreign Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Priority Not Claimed	Certified Copy Attached?	
				YES	NO
9800645	Belgium	09/02/98	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

☐ Additional foreign application numbers are listed on a supplemental priority data sheet PTO/SB/02B attached hereto.

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

Application Number(s)	Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	<input type="checkbox"/> Additional provisional application numbers are listed on a supplemental priority data sheet PTO/SB/02B attached hereto.

[Page 1 of 2]

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Statement under 37 CFR 3.73(b) is enclosed. (Form PTO/SB/96).

SIGNATURE of Applicant or Assignee of Record

Name

Roger DE LATHOUWER

Signature

Date

1 March 2001

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## DECLARATION — Utility or Design Patent Application

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Address: 13 Forest Drive					
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City: Warren		State: N.J.		Zip: 07059	
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Given Name (first and middle (if any))		Family Name or Surname		Date	
Roger		De Lathouwer		1 March 2001	
Inventor's Signature:					
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Mailing Address:					
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